

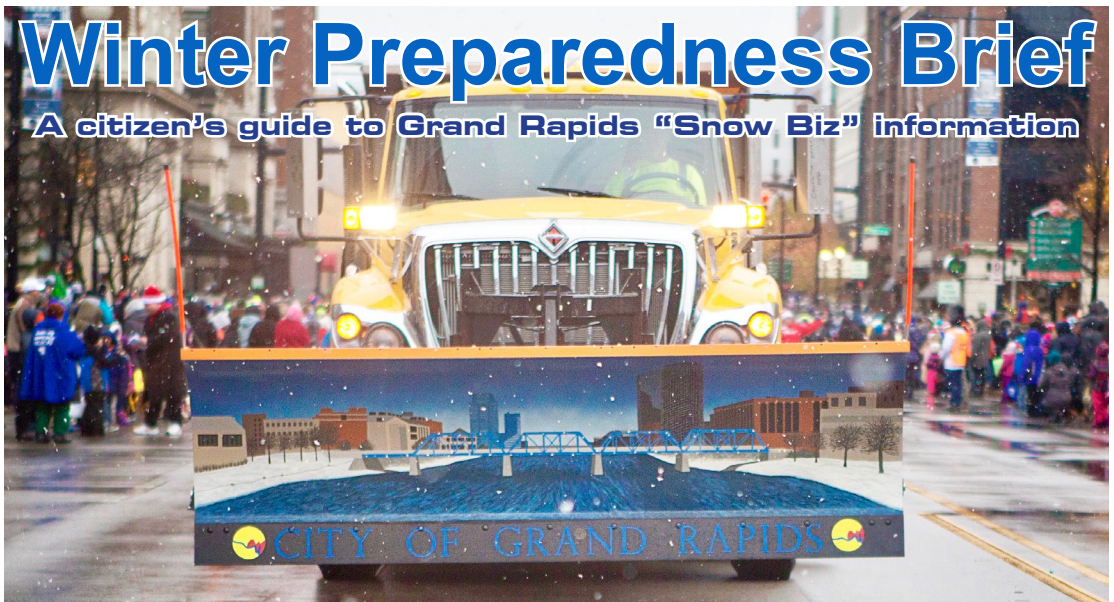


CITY OF  
GRAND  
RAPIDS

Winter 2017-2018

# Winter Preparedness Brief

A citizen's guide to Grand Rapids "Snow Biz" information



Winter in West Michigan can be a spectacular time of year. Blankets of fresh snow and frosted-tipped foliage decorate our landscape. As beautiful as the winter months can be, winter does impact City services to residents. This Winter Preparedness Brief contains information prepared by City departments and 311 Customer Service Agents. The tips and rules contained within can help you survive and thrive during the winter months.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

### Yard Waste

The Domtar site at 2001 Butterworth Ave SW will remain open until the second Saturday in December, weather permitting. The site is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The site will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, but will be open the Friday and Saturday after. The site remains free for City residents. Curbside collection also runs until early December each year. It usually ends the second Friday, weather permitting.

### Refuse & Recycling Holiday Schedule

Refuse and recycling collection is delayed one day throughout the weeks following Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

## Shoveling Out Refuse and Recycling Carts

### Three ways to improve chances of uninterrupted winter pickups

1. Clear a path 3 feet wide from your refuse and recycling cart to the alley or street. Make sure they can be moved freely.
2. Make sure your refuse and recycling carts are shoveled out the night before your collection day.
3. A heavy snowfall within 48 hours of your solid waste collection day may make it impossible to shovel out in time. We understand, but please make sure your cart is shoveled out by the following collection day.

### Proper Placement



### Not Proper Placement







## Green lights for safety

Watch for green flashing lights on Grand Rapids Public Services vehicles this winter. Ice and snow removal trucks now don flashing, rotating or oscillating green lights for greater visibility. These flashing bright green lights help to identify ice and snow operations.

## REFUSE/RECYCLING WINTER TIPS

### Frozen Garbage

Please bag your refuse. Unbagged refuse can freeze in the cart, making it difficult to empty. Bagging the refuse will keep your cart cleaner and help us do our jobs more efficiently.

### Don't Block Sidewalks and Streets

If your refuse and recycling is picked up at the curb, please do not block sidewalks with refuse and recycling carts. A clear path between the carts/bins and the street must be available on collection day.

### Keep Lids Closed

Make sure lids are closed on your solid waste carts. Melting snow and rain can easily fill a cart, freeze and make them overweight.



## SNOW PLOWING

### Here is how we clear snow all across the city

### Priority plowing on first attention routes

First attention streets are the major, high volume streets in the city, such as Leonard, Fulton and Burton streets and Monroe and Division avenues. Please be aware that these roads are priority and weather conditions sometimes force the snow plows from secondary streets back onto first attention routes. Salt is also applied to first attention streets.

### When do plows go onto secondary streets and alleys?



The Public Services Department (PSD) continually monitors the weather. When more than 3 inches of snow has accumulated on the streets and first attention routes are clear, PSD may send plows into local roads, depending upon the temperature and current weather forecast. Deicing material is typically not applied to local streets unless there is a hill, severe curvature or special circumstance for doing so.

### Plowing techniques clear roads faster

The Public Services Department continues to enhance its winter operations program to deliver the highest level of customer service to residents and visitors. This season, plow truck operators will expand the use of liquids in combating snow and ice. Calcium chloride will be applied for the purpose of deicing bridges, hills and curves prior to a snow event when conditions warrant. All plow trucks are also equipped with liquid storage capabilities that allow pre-treating of salt as it is spread on street surfaces. This pre-wetting method allows material to stick to road surfaces where distributed and greatly reduces a bouncing effect, resulting in quicker activation. Pre-wetting salt has proven to reduce the amount of salt utilized in winter operations by as much as 30 percent. Less salt used in winter operations furthers the City's sustainability goals and lessens the environmental impact on our rivers and streams. The City also has installed side wings on much of its plow truck fleet. These wings extend off the right side of the truck and, when stretched out, can plow an additional half lane of snow, further improving snow plowing efficiencies.





## SNOW SHOVELING

### Sidewalks

The clearing of ice and snow on sidewalks is the responsibility of the property owner. The full width of the sidewalk should be cleared within 24 hours of the accumulation or placement of snow or ice on said sidewalks. Ordinance requires that sidewalks be completely cleared of all snow and ice, down to the concrete. Shoveled sidewalks contribute to the livability of our neighborhoods by providing year-round mobility options for all residents, especially those who are not able to drive. Clear sidewalks keeps our pedestrian network safe and accessible in the winter months, particularly for seniors, children, and those with disabilities. Properties remaining in non-compliance after City notification, may be cleared by a City contractor at the property owner's expense.

### Shoveling and other techniques

The City's primary objective is to remove snow from the streets. There are a few ways residents can assist with this process. If you have a driveway, please park in the driveway and leave the road clear to be plowed. If on-street parking is your only option, try to change where you park throughout the week and obey all odd-even parking restrictions. This will help allow snow to be removed by the plows and not packed down by cars. The City also asks that residents refrain from shoveling or blowing snow into the streets. Plow trucks will end up pushing it back into driveways the next time they pass. Instead, throw the snow into your yard.

We understand that it can be frustrating when plows push snow into driveways, sidewalks, fire hydrants and mailboxes. Again, the City's primary goal is to clear the street. One technique that can help keep driveways from being blocked is by shoveling a "corner" of the right-of-way free of snow in the area several feet before the driveway. Clearing an area large

enough to hold the snow coming off the plow may help reduce the need to shovel a second time.

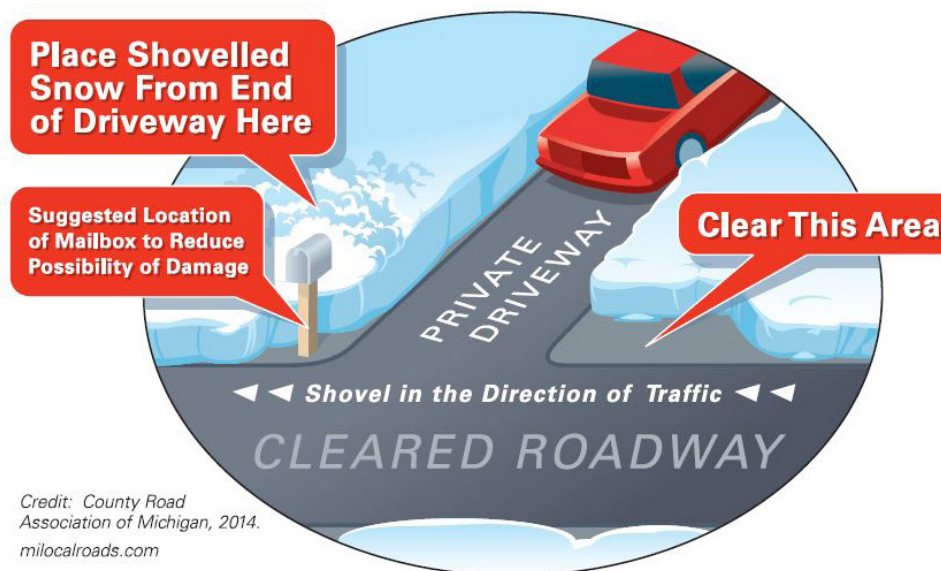
The City does not provide snow removal services for driveways or sidewalks. Individuals needing assistance with snow removal should contact a private snowplowing company or seek out possible alternatives via United Way (2-1-1) or your Neighborhood Association. Other resources such as your local church, neighbor or family member could be of assistance as well.

### Assistance

The City does not provide snow removal services for driveways or sidewalks, but various local agencies can provide help. Some suggestions are United Way (2-1-1), Red Cross and your Neighborhood Association. Also, resources such as your local church, private contractor, neighbor or family member could be of assistance.

### REDUCING THE "SECOND SHOVEL"

Residents can help ensure the ends of their driveways remain clear of snow after snowplows come through. Shoveling a "corner" of the right-of-way free of snow in the area several feet before the driveway will help keep snow from being pushed into the driveway in an icy, heavy pile. Clearing an area large enough to hold the snow coming off the plow may help reduce the need to shovel a second time.







## PARKING

Following winter parking rules helps keep city streets safe

### Odd-even parking

The odd-even parking ordinance is used by the City to create enough space City service vehicles to access a street during the fall and winter months. This allows for street sweepers to sweep up leaves and plows to service the street during snow events and create a lane for driving. Although the City attempts to clear the streets in sync with the parking regulations, the plows may not service both sides of the street during a snow event. The snow plows do attempt to widen streets and clean up in between snow events, weather permitting.

This is a seasonal parking rule that takes place Nov.1 to April 1. To avoid a \$20 parking ticket that may be given whether snow is present or not, please park on the even-numbered side of the street on even-numbered days and on the odd-numbered side of the street on odd-numbered days from 1 a.m. to 6 p.m. From 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. the next day, parking is permitted on both sides of the street unless there are signs otherwise restricting parking. **Before you go to bed, think ahead!**



### Same Side Parking - Winter Restrictions

With collaboration from the City's Traffic Safety, Fire and Public Services departments, some odd-even parking has been eliminated on certain streets November 1 to April 1. The parking has been modified to one-sided parking. Some streets now have no parking at all. This change allows street sweepers, emergency vehicles and snow plows to more easily navigate neighborhoods streets. Signs identify these one-sided parking streets.



The City recognizes that one-sided parking makes it more difficult for residents to clear the snow on the side of the street where parking is allowed. The City does its best to work with residents to assist with snow removal if it becomes necessary.

For updated information on the streets affected, call 311 or 616-456-3000. The information is also available at [www.grcity.us](http://www.grcity.us) under the Traffic Safety Department where there is a link to the winter restriction map. The web address is <http://grcity.us/enterprise-services/Lights-Signals-and-Signs/Pages/default.aspx>.



## Adopt-A-Hydrant and keep your neighborhood safe

**Sign up and earn 1,000 mygrcitypoints for discounts at local businesses**



**mygrcitypoints**  
\*.com

Adopt-A-Hydrant is a citizen volunteer program that allows you to get involved in the community and help keep everyone safe by pledging to keep a specific fire hydrant or group of hydrants clear of vegetation and heavy snow and reporting any issues. By adopting a hydrant and shoveling a clearing of 6 feet around the hydrant, volunteers protect themselves and their neighbors, providing access for firefighters and water system staff during emergencies. Participants earn an adoption certificate and 1,000 mygrcitypoints.

The Adopt-A-Hydrant program is a way to encourage citizens to participate directly in the maintenance of the overall infrastructure and safety of our community. With more than 13,000 fire hydrants systemwide, volunteers are a tremendous help in keeping access to hydrants open through the winter, especially when heavy snow accumulations or snowplows bury the hydrant.

Please visit [www.grcity.us/adoptahydrant](http://www.grcity.us/adoptahydrant) for program information.



## Christmas tree recycling a “mulch” better option



### Free drop-off sites

Grand Rapids offers free drop-off sites for Christmas trees after the holidays. The sites, open Dec. 27 to Feb. 2, are located at:

- Riverside Park (north entrance), 3151 Monroe Ave NE
- JC Family Park, 2531 Kalamazoo Ave SE
- Lincoln Park, 1120 Bridge St NW
- Huff Park, 2399 Ball Ave NE

### Fee-based curbside pickup program

The alternative method for disposing of your tree is to attach a \$2.50 City bulk yard waste tag (purple tag) to the Christmas tree and place it in your pickup area by 7 a.m. on the regular refuse collection day.

Bulk yard waste tags may be purchased at City Hall, 300 Monroe Ave NW, in the customer service lobby. City Hall is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some local retailers may also have the tags in stock.

Christmas trees placed in the refuse pickup area must be properly tagged for collection. The tag must be visible at the time of collection. Residents should make every effort to be sure that the tree is able to be collected (not buried in the snow) and the tag visible. All ornaments, other decorations, tinsel, nails, tree stands and any plastic bags on the tree need to be removed prior to collection. If not properly tagged, the property owner is subject to a notice of violation and possible fine. Lost or stolen tags are the responsibility of the resident to replace.





## Avoid frozen pipes

Keep your pipes **warm** this winter

### Identify your water main shutoff valve

Know where your main water shutoff is inside your home. Typically, it is located near the meter where the water line enters the building. It is very important to know where this valve is located because, if a pipe bursts anywhere in the house, this valve can turn the water off. Be sure everyone in the family knows where it is and what it does. This will allow you and others to find the valve quickly in an emergency.

### Protect your water meter

The water meter is installed by the Grand Rapids Water System. However, it is the property owner's responsibility to protect the meter from damage. The space where the meter is located must be heated to protect it from freezing. If the meter is frozen or damaged, you will be charged for replacement.

### Take extra precautions during extreme temperatures

- Pipes located next to an outside wall are most susceptible to freezing temperatures. The same is true for pipes located in a garage or another unheated building. Exposed pipes in these areas should be wrapped or insulated, or alternatively shut off and drained prior to winter.
- Open cupboard doors under sinks and open pipe chases where possible, especially where plumbing is in an exterior wall, to let interior heat warm the pipes.
- Temporarily keep a steady but slow drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter to keep water moving and less likely to freeze.
- If you're away for more than a day, shutting off your water and leaving the thermostat at 55 degrees or higher can reduce the chance of broken pipes.



### If your water pipes DO freeze...

- NEVER thaw a frozen pipe with a torch or open flame; a hair dryer or the exhaust from a vacuum cleaner is a safer alternative.
- Opening a furnace vent or an inside basement door may also assist in thawing a frozen pipe and getting heat into the basement.
- Do not use electrical appliances in areas of standing water. You could be electrocuted.
- It may be best to contact a licensed plumber to avoid damage when pipes thaw.
- If the lines are frozen, assume they may be broken or split. Purchase repair clamps at a plumbing store or contact a plumber, and be prepared to turn water off when the pipes thaw.
- If there is no water to your home, the problem may be in the street if the water has been shut off to repair a broken water main.

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The *Winter Preparedness Brief* is a public service of the City's 311 Customer Service Center and Office of Communications.



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